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THE PLACE OF PURPOSEFUL RECREATION IN RURAL AMERICA TODAY.

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AMERICAN USE OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES HAS INCREASED TREMENDOUSLY SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II. WITH A POPULATION OF 180 MILLION THAT IS TO DOUBLE BY THE YEAR 2000, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE USE OF THESE FACILITIES WILL TRIPLE BY THE SAME DATE. RECREATION WILL BECOME A MAJOR SEGMENT OF THE RURAL ECONOMY. THE INTEREST TAKEN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THIS AREA IS SHOWN BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES REVIEW COMMISSION IN 1958, AND AS A RESULT OF THEIR REPORT IN 1962 THE CREATION OF THE BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION AND THE RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL BY THE PRESIDENT IN THAT SAME YEAR. THE PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL IS TO PROVIDE BROAD POLICY ADVICE AND FACILITATE COORDINATED EFFORTS AMONG THE VARIOUS FEDERAL AGENCIES. THE BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION SERVES AS STAFF TO THE COUNCIL. PUBLIC LAW 88-29, THE ORGANIC ACT, AUTHORIZES THE FOLLOWING BUREAU FUNCTIONS--A CONTINUING INVENTORY OF RECREATION NEEDS AND RESOURCES, A CLASSIFICATION OF THESE RESOURCES, A NATIONWIDE PLAN FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION, PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, ENCOURAGEMENT OF INTERSTATE AND REGIONAL AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION, AND REQUIREMENT OF FEDERAL AGENCIES WITH RECREATION RESPONSIBILITIES TO CONSULT WITH THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR. ITS IDEAL PURPOSE IS TO MAKE OUTDOOR RECREATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AMERICANS. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN COUNTRY LIFE ASSOCIATION MEETING (WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 7, 1964). (DK)

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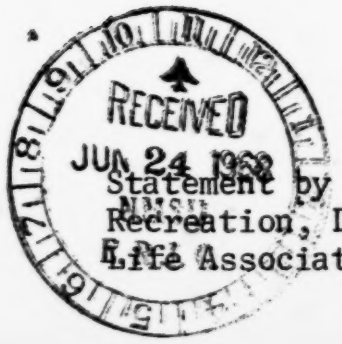


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Statement by Lawrence N. Stevens, Associate Director, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, before the American Country Life Association meeting, Washington, D. C., July 7, 1964

## The Place of Purposeful Recreation in Rural America Today

It is a pleasure to be with you today and I am, of course, delighted that you have chosen as your conference theme the subject of Purposeful Recreation for Personal Growth in Country Life. It is an exciting subject and a field I have been deeply involved in during the past four years--two of them with the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and the last two years with the new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

The more time and thought I devote to the subject, the more aware I become of the complexity and the increasing significance of outdoor recreation in the America of the 60's. And so I am very happy to be here to talk with you about what is happening in outdoor recreation in the United States today.

In his address at the University of Michigan Commencement exercises last May, President Johnson said, "The purpose of protecting the life of our Nation and preserving the liberty of our citizens is to pursue the happiness of our people. Our success in that pursuit is the test of our success as a nation." The President presented us with the challenge to use the wealth we have achieved to "enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization." He envisioned the "Great Society"--where man can renew contact with nature, where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. He warned that we must act to prevent an Ugly America.

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I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity of meeting with a group representing the rural areas of our Nation. I say this because certain economic and social factors of the 1960's have combined to make outdoor recreation of special significance to rural America.

As we all know, the United States is becoming more and more an urban society. Over 60 percent of our citizens now live in cities, and this figure is expected to rise to 75 percent by the turn of the century. A major result of this movement to the cities is that fewer Americans have ready access to the outdoors. The fact remains, however, that the outdoors has long been a part of the American heritage, and most of our citizens have a deep-seated desire to retain some contact with the countryside. When they think of a weekend trip or a vacation, they think of getting away from the city and going to a rural area. To do this takes time and costs money. But the record shows that they have increasing amounts of time and money. The result is that much of the $20 billion spent annually on outdoor recreation is spent in rural areas.

I need not tell you that the economic benefits of such spending are recognized and sought after by many rural areas of the Nation--from the villages along the coast of Maine to the farms of the Midwest to the dude ranches of the Rocky Mountain States.

But there is keen competition for the recreation dollar, and it is important that the rural areas keep this fact in mind. City dwellers go to the country primarily to enjoy the beauty and quite of the landscape, and when a particular area forgets this and allows deterioration to set in, it will lose its attraction and the economic

benefits that stem from providing an attractive environment. The countryside and small towns need protection from unattractive developments. Roadside improvement programs and adequate zoning measures can do much to preserve the beauty and charm of rural America.

I urge, therefore, that you work closely with the planning agencies of your State, county, or community, and with the private organizations dedicated to the task of keeping America beautiful.

Secretary Freeman of the Department of Agriculture is profoundly aware of the importance of outdoor recreation to rural America, and several agencies of that Department are working with rural people to help them achieve the benefits that can flow from this type of development. You will no doubt learn more about these programs from the panel discussion this afternoon and from Assistant Secretary John Baker this evening.

When we talk about outdoor recreation, we are talking about a multitude of activities and a wide variety of resources. We are talking about activities ranging from a quiet, solitary walk along a river bank, enjoying a concert outdoors, driving through the countryside for the pleasure of seeing green trees, fields, and open spaces--to the most extensive and elaborate pack trip over the Alaska mountains. We are talking about resources ranging from the vacant lot next door, the nearby fishing hole--to the glorious Grand Canyon.

When we talk about recreation as a creative use of leisure time, we are not simply talking about filling up hours with activity, we are talking about using those hours free from the demands of life to enrich

and elevate--to enhance the quality of our lives. Sebastian de Grazia, in his book Of Time, Work, and Leisure, has said that the essence of leisure is freedom--freedom from the necessity of work--freedom to do what one wants to do. He describes leisure as a state of being in which you pause, open yourself up to life, discover your own individual beat and rhythm and how it blends with nature. Through outdoor recreation we can learn about ourselves, about the world we live in, about relationships with others. Through outdoor recreation we can increase our appreciation of the values of solitude, of the beauty around us. We can explore new ideas, gain new skills and interests, develop social values. Outdoor recreation can contribute to creative, exciting, full living--to our personal well-being and to the health and vitality of our Nation.

The challenge is to assure that we and--equally important--future generations have available the wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, the diversity which offers each man the opportunity to participate as he chooses. Failure to concern ourselves with outdoor recreation means a daily limiting of the choices and opportunities available.

Since the end of World War II, the American people have turned more and more to the out-of-doors. This has been reflected in increased visits to parks, forests, and other recreation areas, in increased numbers of hunting and fishing licenses, in greater sales of outdoor equipment, and in many other ways. We know that 90 percent of all Americans participate in some form of outdoor recreation. Our population in 1960 exceeded 180 million; that figure is expected to double by the

year 2000. Consider this in conjunction with substantial increases in leisure time, disposable income, and our increasing mobility. This gives some indication of the impact of outdoor recreation upon our society today and of the even greater impact it will have in the future.

During the 1950's,the Congress became concerned that, in making choices among the numerous demands on our energies and resources, America must not neglect its heritage of the out-of-doors.

In 1958, the Congress established the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, to undertake an intensive, nationwide study of the Nation's outdoor recreation needs and resources. In so doing, Congress gave recognition to the value of outdoor activities for the Nation's health and well-being. The Commission was a so-called "mixed commission" consisting of four senators and four representatives equally divided between the two parties, plus seven members appointed by the President. Among the Presidential appointees was Mr. Lawrance S. Rockefeller who served as chairman. In the authorizing Act, the Congress assigned the Commission a three-fold mission:

To determine the outdoor recreation wants and needs of the American people now and what they will be in the years 1976 and 2000.

To determine the recreation resources of the Nation available to satisfy those needs now and in the years 1976 and 2000.

To determine what policies and programs should be recommended to ensure that the needs of the present and future are adequately and efficiently met.

The Commission recruited a staff and launched an extensive study program covering many aspects of outdoor recreation in the United States.

Separate studies were made under contract by universities, government agencies, and other research institutions on special facets of outdoor recreation such as wilderness, seashore, hunting, and fishing. The Commission made the first comprehensive inventory of non-urban public recreation areas. After three years of study and many days of deliberation, the Commission submitted its report entitled, "Outdoor Recreation for America" to the President and the Congress in January 1962.

As a result of its review of the outdoor recreation picture, the Commission made some 50 recommendations. Among these--and one of the most basic--was its recommendation that a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation be established in the Department of the Interior. The reasoning behind this proposal is expressed by the Commission in these words:

"Providing adequate outdoor recreation opportunities for Americans over the next 40 years is a major challenge that will require investment of money, resources, and work. Leadership, vision, and judgement will be needed to guide this investment into the most efficient channels. The present uncoordinated efforts cannot do the job. There must be a new agency of government at the Federal level to provide guidance and assistance to the other levels of government and to the private sector, as well as within the Federal Government itself."

Unlike the reports of some commissions, the ORRRC report resulted in almost immediate action. Only a month after receiving the report, President Kennedy, in a message to Congress, endorsed several of its basic recommendations including the establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the Recreation Advisory Council. Secretary Udall created the Bureau on April 2, 1962, and later that month the President

established the Council. The Council consists of the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Commerce, and Health, Education and Welfare, and the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Its purpose is to provide broad policy advice and facilitate coordinated efforts among the various Federal agencies. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation serves as staff to the Council. Secretary Udall served as chairman for the first two years, and was succeeded by Secretary Freeman last April.

In May, 1963, the Congress passed Public Law 88-29 which is the Bureau's Organic Act. In passing this act, Congress made a fundamental statement of policy:

"That the Congress finds and declares it is desirable that all American people of present and future generations be assured adequate outdoor recreation resources, and that it is desirable for all levels of government and private interests to take prompt and coordinated action to the extent practical without diminishing or affecting their respective powers and functions to conserve, develop, and utilize such resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people."

The Organic Act authorizes the following Bureau functions:

Preparation and maintenance of a continuing inventory of the outdoor recreation needs and resources of the United States;

Preparation of a system for classifying outdoor recreation resources;

Formulation and maintenance of a nationwide outdoor recreation plan;

Provision of technical assistance to and cooperation with the States, their political subdivisions, and private interests;

Encouragement of interstate and regional cooperation in outdoor recreation planning, acquisition, and development;

Encouraging interdepartmental cooperation and promotion of coordination of Federal plans and activities generally relating to outdoor recreation.

The Act also requires the heads of Federal agencies with outdoor recreation responsibilities to consult with and be consulted by the Secretary of the Interior with respect to their respective responsibilities and to carry out such responsibilities in general conformance with the nationwide plan authorized by the Act.

These authorities are designed to enable the Bureau to provide means for stimulating increased activity in outdoor recreation at Federal, State, and local levels of government and by the private section.

One of this Bureau's major responsibilities is to prepare a comprehensive Nationwide Plan to guide the Nation's outdoor recreation development. This plan will define our present and future outdoor recreation needs, identify problems, and propose solutions. It will include information on public demand for outdoor recreation which will, for the first time, provide a systematic approach to this new dimension in our society and economy. It will take into consideration the programs of the Federal, State, and local governments and of the private sector. The ORRRC studies revealed that existing recreation opportunities fall short of meeting current needs and that, while the 1960 population will double by the year 2000, demands for outdoor recreation are expected at least to triple. The Nationwide plan will recommend the kinds of

action needed to make certain that these burgeoning needs are effectively and efficiently met.

Another major responsibility of the Bureau is promoting Federal coordination in outdoor recreation. The need for such coordination was clearly recognized by the ORRRC Commission. As their report pointed out, "There are now more than 20 Federal agencies with programs involving some aspect of outdoor recreation. While the programs of these agencies are generally well planned in themselves, little thought is given in any of them to the over-all development of outdoor recreation throughout the Nation. Thus a complicated and difficult pattern of intergovernmental relations is created, as numerous Federal organizations seek to work individually and separately with a wide variety of State and local agencies. There is at present no focal point for coordination of recreation policy, planning, programs, or management. Over-all responsibility for initiating and guiding a national effort in outdoor recreation has never been explicitly assigned."

In our Federal coordination activities we work closely with the Recreation Advisory Council and currently have underway a series of studies of substantial inter-agency significance. These include such problems as the need for a national system of scenic roads and parkways, including full development of the scenic and recreational potential of existing national and State road programs; proposed recreation user fees for Federal lands and waters; the role of the private sector in providing outdoor recreation; and an examination of non-Federal management of recreation facilities on Federal land and waters. In exploring the role of the private sector, the Council will

examine both the extent to which economic development by the private sector may be expected to meet recreation needs and the kinds and amounts of public assistance needed to effectively promote economic development in recreation.

The ORRRC Commission recognized that the most important force in providing outdoor recreation is private endeavor. Indications are that private outdoor recreation enterprises provide well over half of all opportunities for outdoor recreation in the United States. During the past few years, more than 18,000 farmers and ranchers have installed commercial outdoor recreation enterprises on their lands. Resorts, dude ranches, picnic grounds, leasing of fishing and hunting rights, and renting of camping and vacation cabin sites are among the most frequent forms of farm-based outdoor recreation enterprises.

The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Recreation Advisory Council, and many other facets of our activity today are new--a response to the huge challenge of a population which wants, needs, and will demand more and more recreation opportunities in the out-of-doors. I feel that we have made substantial progress during the last two years. But I am also aware of the tremendous task that lies ahead. It will require the best efforts of all--of the three levels of government and of private organizations and individuals.

In closing, I would like to quote from ORRRC once again--a passage that I believe states very well the role of purposeful recreation in America today:

"Leisure is the blessing and could be the curse of a progressive, successful civilization. The amount of leisure already at hand is

enough to have made many Americans uneasy. Ours is a culture that has always been inclined to look upon idle time with some misgivings for reasons that trace to the Puritan tradition of industry, but which spring also from the historic and very practical need for hard work in the building of a Nation. Certainly a substantial adjustment in perspective will be required as we move into a period in which the leisure available to all citizens may be greatly increased.

"In any event, most Americans face the prospect of more leisure time in the future and thus the challenge of using it for their own enrichment and development as individuals and as citizens. This is precisely the contribution that outdoor recreation can make. . .For at its best, outdoor activity, whether undertaken lightly or with the serious intent of the perfectionist, is essentially a "renewing" experience--a refreshing change from the workaday world.

"This is true no matter what an individual actually chooses to do in the outdoors. As long as the activity is freely chosen--because it is refreshing and interesting to do--then it serves the basic function of "recreation"--the task of recreating human vitality.

"Outdoor recreation also has cultural values that are essential to the health of the Nation. It is a part of the educational process that strengthens men's minds as well as their bodies; that broadens their understanding of the laws of nature; that sharpens their appreciation of its manifold beauties; and that fortifies man's most precious possession--the spirit which gives life its meaning. These are the qualities which in the long run make a Nation and its people truly great and which find strong nourishment in outdoor recreation."

The message of these words is that outdoor recreation is essential to the cultural, physical, moral, and spiritual well-being of the American people. It can enrich and enhance the quality of our lives--and the quality of our American civilization.

The challenge is to make this way of life accessible to all Americans.